

Taylor University

## Pillars at Taylor University

---

Other Books

Books

---

1951

### Honor to Whom Honor is Due: The Life Story of Joseph Preston Blades Especially as Related to Taylor University Upland, Indiana

Burt Wilmot Ayres  
*Taylor University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pillars.taylor.edu/ayres-collection-books>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Ayres, Burt Wilmot, "Honor to Whom Honor is Due: The Life Story of Joseph Preston Blades Especially as Related to Taylor University Upland, Indiana" (1951). *Other Books*. 3.  
<https://pillars.taylor.edu/ayres-collection-books/3>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Books at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Other Books by an authorized administrator of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact [pillars@taylor.edu](mailto:pillars@taylor.edu).

# HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE

The Life Story  
of  
JOSEPH PRESTON BLADES

Especially as Related to  
TAYLOR UNIVERSITY  
UPLAND, INDIANA

By  
Burt Wilmot Ayres

Vice President Emeritus of Taylor University

Whatever revenue the sale of this book shall yield beyond the cost of producing and handling (if any) will go into the Student Aid Fund of Taylor University to assist needy worthy students.

---

This book may be ordered from the author, B. W. Ayres, or from the Taylor University Book Store: address in either case, Upland, Indiana.

Price, single copy postage prepaid, 50 cents.

Price of five or more copies to one address, prepaid, at 40 cents each.

Remittance must accompany order. Amounts up to one dollar may be paid in postage stamps of 1, 2, and 3-cent denominations.

---

#### OTHER BOOKLETS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

The Wrath of the Lamb—a neatly printed 14 page booklet which has had high commendation from well informed readers.

The Soul's "What If?" and Reliving Life. A 10-page booklet neatly constructed, containing two separate poems in blank verse. These contain serious reflections embodying some of the author's philosophy of life. Both booklets spiritually helpful.

While the supply lasts, either of the above, 10 cents postpaid. If both are added to an order for Honor to Whom Honor is Due the two will be 15 cents. Order from Author only. Supply very limited.

920 B56

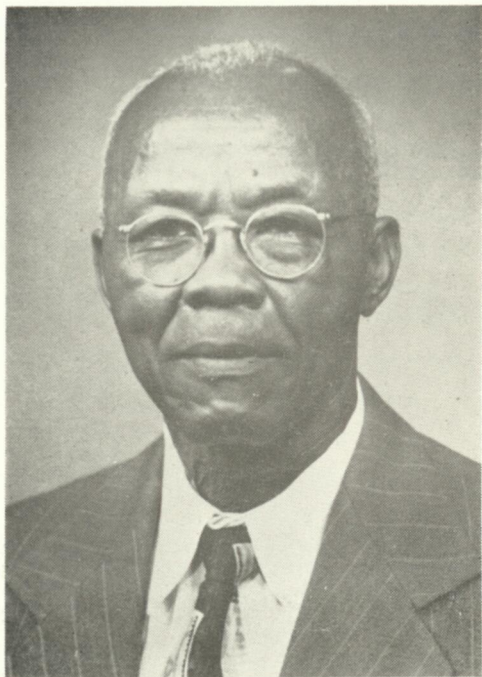
28726

EX LIBRIS



AYRES COLLECTION  
TAYLOR UNIVERSITY





JOSEPH PRESTON BLADES  
in 1950



BURT WILMOT AYRES  
in 1950



# HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE

The Life Story  
of

**Joseph Preston Blades**

Especially as Related to  
Taylor University  
Upland, Indiana

*By*

**BURT WILMOT AYRES**

Vice President Emeritus of Taylor University

Copyright, 1951

By the Author, Burt Wilmot Ayres

Published by the Author

## DEDICATION

To the memory of The Reverend Monroe Vayhinger, D.D., LL.D., President of Taylor University, 1908-1921, to whose personal and official kindness and sympathetic assistance the biographee in the narrative owes a great debt of gratitude for his secondary and collegiate education; and under whose able and sacrificial Presidency the author served for eleven happy years as Dean of the College, this booklet is lovingly dedicated.



## PREFACE

WHY from among the hundreds of worthy alumni of Taylor University have I chosen the subject of this sketch? Primarily because his life contains some incidents which give it great significance in the history of his *alma mater* and which are known to only a few persons. These incidents have never been put into print as a part of the history of the school; and I am the only one still living who knows them well enough to give them as authentic history. Not only are these events important in their consequences in the school's life, but they are very interesting in their antecedents and manner of occurrence, which make them seem preternatural or miraculous—a kind of special providence. Then, too, this life of another negro student in a very strange way links up with that of Samuel Morris, to whose spiritual impact Taylor University owes so much. The two lives brought together in Taylor's history—though not face to face—are complementary to each other and present together a wonderful beauty, richness, and balance of the mystical, rational, and ethical in Christian experience, life, and character as manifested in the black race.

In addition to these outstanding incidents which transcend the natural and ordinary, the life portrayed has in it many qualities that make the reading of it highly worthwhile as a stimulus to noble and courageous living. I hope, too, that the small volume

will make a real contribution to race tolerance. Not alone for Taylor history have I written and published the story of the life of Joseph Preston Blades, but to give honor to whom honor is due. While Mr. Blades is central in our social picture in this story, personalities impinge upon one another, goodness and greatness bringing into view these qualities possessed by others. I have, though briefly, tried to pay to these some tribute of high respect and honor. Mr. Blades, in his own appropriate, gracious words has likewise done so.

It is my wish (may I say my fond hope?) that this condensed life story in the important, but greatly neglected, field of religious biography, so valuable in character education for the young, and spiritual profit for all ages, may be read by many with spiritual enrichment. The future students of Taylor should read it, and draw from it a knowledge of their spiritual heritage in the institution, and a desire to perpetuate its spirit and objectives.

BURT WILMOT AYRES  
*Vice President Emeritus  
of Taylor University*

Upland, Indiana  
December, 1950

## INTRODUCTION

**I**N THE lives of institutions and individuals that seek to put first things first in a world where the forces of good and the forces of evil are in bitter conflict, there are experiences and events which at the time of their occurrence are very puzzling. They are difficult for the mind to fit into a coherent rational and purposeful order. It takes the perspective of the long look backward, many times, to sustain the faith that ultimately the universe is friendly to values—to the good. These puzzling paradoxes are found to be of great value and significance as they find their place of positive value in the further unfolding of life. The philosophical optimism of the Greek and Roman Stoicism reached the extreme position of treating the pains and incidents of suffering as goods when fitted into the whole of life and into a universal purposeful world order. In the Christian interpretation of life, for the individual Christian, we find the same philosophical optimism, but the optimism is differently grounded. For the Stoic it is the grim and determined set of the will to bear it, supported by a belief that it ultimately fits into a rationally satisfactory result—a coherent and rational universe. In the Christian who has found, through grace of the Redeemer, forgiveness of sins and a constraining love for Him, and thus for God, of Whom this Redeemer is the fullest revelation, the motivation for the optimism is interpersonal; hence, it is grounded in a loving trust in



One Who cares and shares, One Who is able to transmute suffering to a higher level of meaning. Notice the following from St. Paul: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Cor. 4:17) In the verse preceding this, notice the change of levels, it being a change from physical evil or loss to moral good or gain: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Another saying of St. Paul embodies the same principle: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

Sometimes we see misfortune to one of God's children quickly transformed into a much greater good on the same level; it may be a loss in material goods, or a loss of position or employment, which may be very trying, but almost immediately leading to something much more important and more satisfying. Then too, as we shall see later, in the brief biography to which this is but an introductory chapter, the temporary loss to an individual leads to more than a compensation for the suffering individual, and besides to a great good for a great institution, and through it for the whole world.

In this introductory chapter, too, the statement should be made that in a peculiar and almost miraculous way Taylor University has had great contributions to its life spiritually—and, indirectly, materially—by negro students. It seems fitting, therefore, to go back into the history of Taylor University to show the institutional background for the biographical in-

cidents which are to follow. For our purpose here, we shall not, to any great extent, give causes of events.

In 1890 the control and ownership (as well as the liabilities) of the institution were transferred from the North Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the National Association of Local Preachers of this church, incorporated in the State of Maryland with headquarters in Baltimore; and the name of the school was changed from Fort Wayne College to Taylor University. Christian B. Stemen, of Fort Wayne, a noted surgeon and a local preacher, served a brief time as president, probably better designated as acting president. Then, Rev. Thaddeus C. Reade accepted the presidency in 1891. It was in the year 1893 that the University was moved to Upland; but in the two years of Dr. Reade's presidency in Fort Wayne, an event occurred which proved to be of wonderful significance to the future of Taylor University. It was the coming of Samuel Morris, or Prince Kaboo, as he was called on the Dark Continent. As previously mentioned, the name of the college was changed in 1890. The new name was in honor of the great missionary, William Taylor, who, after establishing the church in San Francisco during the gold rush period, had gone—largely on his own appointment—and with a few helpers had established self-supporting missions in South America, India, Australia, and Africa. Later he had been elected by the General Conference as Missionary Bishop of Africa. Little did those local preachers, when they named the school for the great Missionary Bishop, think that a product of his early missionary work in Africa would come to America to learn more about



the Holy Ghost, be sent to Taylor University by Stephen Merrit, of New York, and be so filled with the Holy Spirit and kindle such a flame of holy fire, both in the college and in the city, as to become a permanent benefactor to the institution which bears the Bishop's name. The religious life of the school was active and commendable before the coming of Sammy Morris, but the passionate quest, the simplicity of faith, the gracious enduement and supernatural radiance of this earnest, unlettered African boy not only produced a great spiritual uplift for the few months of his life in the school, but left a deposit which became a self-perpetuating force in the lives of those who knew Sammy, and through them to others, and on through the life of the school. Fortunately the humble and open-hearted President Reade was so impressed by the Spirit's working in this black boy that he wrote a sketch of his life which became a religious classic. Many ministers read it and found great help in their religious experience and in the effectiveness of their ministry. Young people of the churches where it was read were led to full-time Christian service. The booklet containing this story of Sammy's life found its way into foreign countries and was translated into some foreign languages. For many years after his death, a large percentage of the students who came to Taylor University for their education mentioned that the reading of this sketch of his life brought them to Taylor. Through the sale of this booklet, in the early years of the school after its relocation in Upland, Dr. Reade largely paid for the frame building (in its original form) to which he gave the name Sammy Morris Hall. The profit on

the book was not the real source of financial help so much as were the gifts from those who were blessed by it, and who wanted to help the school to which he came, and from which were going many missionaries to take the place of the life Sammy had hoped to give to his race in Africa. The influence of that life is still operative in the many Taylor students who have given their lives to carry the Gospel to the Dark Continent—yes, and in hundreds of others who have given consecrated lives to other mission fields, and in other forms of full-time Christian service.

If before the coming of Sammy Morris to Taylor University there was any race prejudice against negro students, the wonderful effect of the Christlike spirit of this youth dissolved it and has kept this institution officially open and cordial toward the admission and treatment of students of the black race and, in fact, of every race who have enrolled there. Once when quite a large group of white students from a college in the Southland transferred to Taylor, where there were two or three colored students at that time, there was some protest for a time on the part of some of these against eating with a negro student at the same table in the college dining room. For a brief period, until they became accustomed to the racial tolerance in the North, they were not placed at the same table, but they all ate at the same time in the same room. In the half century of my connection with Taylor University, I have never known a negro student to be guilty of any social offense; and as Dean, Vice President, and Acting President, I was so related to problems of conduct that any serious breach of good behavior would surely have been

brought to my attention. In some cases a very close friendship was built up between colored and white young men.

Many things of interest about Sammy Morris—the result of his life and death, his burial place, etc.—could be given, and volumes could be written about the great world Missionary Bishop, William Taylor, and the work he did in Africa, and about the great Christian President of Taylor University, 1891-1902, who wrote and distributed over a wide area the first published life of Samuel Morris (Prince Kaboo); but the sketches of these lives are already in print. For Taylor University students or others desiring to have a wider knowledge of persons referred to in this phase of the institution's history, the following sources are mentioned, and likely are found in the University Library. A very much abridged pamphlet, or booklet, "Life of Samuel Morris," may be secured through the office of the President of Taylor University, and the University Bookstore. A more comprehensive life of Samuel Morris—a small cloth-bound volume called "An Angel in Ebony"—was written (after much research in the files of the newspapers of the period of Sammy's life in Fort Wayne) by Jorge Masa, a brilliant young Filipino of the class of 1928. The copyright to this was given by him to his *alma mater*. A more recent book in this life was published under the name of "The March of Faith" by Lindley Baldwin, who, as a resident of Fort Wayne, knew Sammy personally. This author was also a student in Taylor, under its former name, Fort Wayne College. A very readable and reliable (I believe) volume under the title "The Soul Digger,"



written by John Paul, D.D., during his presidency of Taylor University, 1922-1931, is the life of Bishop William Taylor. Those interested in the life of the President, who, perhaps more than any other President, or staff member, fixed the trends, educational pattern and objectives of Taylor for a half century from 1891, will find in the school annual, "The Gem," of 1921, a sketch of his life, covering especially the last eleven years, which were devotedly given to administering Taylor University. This article bears the caption "The Late President Thaddeus Constantine Reade, D.D., LL.D."; and the author is B. W. Ayres.

This introduction is drawn out to this great length with the purpose of probably making it a part of a more comprehensive book dealing with a number of significant events of Taylor University history. It is written also in my belief that many of its readers will be interested in knowing the institutional atmosphere into which the person whose life is to be sketched came; and how this institutional atmosphere is in a sense "the lengthened shadow" of the African boy, who without money, but undaunted, and with great faith in the Christian God and in the Holy Spirit as a guide into all spiritual truth, overcame every obstacle and reached Taylor University; and, really in a few months by his life and death set in motion great spiritual forces, one line of which has been, and is, Taylor University.

In the sketch of the life of Joseph Preston Blades, another white soul under an ebony skin, we shall see how "God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform."

# CHAPTER I

## THE BIOGRAPHER AND THE BIOGRAPHEE

**I**N THE Introduction I sought to give the historic institutional background, reaching back about seven years beyond my becoming a member of the faculty of Taylor University in September, 1897. As the life story of the student mentioned in the last sentence of the Introduction will reveal a channel of blessing through the same racial medium, but in many ways in marked contrast to Sammy Morris, it is very germane to my purpose to have at least some vital characteristics of Sammy Morris and the events and influences growing out of his short but dynamic life brought into the picture, as presented in the Introduction, and incidentally, perhaps more.

Now, what I have to say will seem to be another introductory chapter. I never met Sammy Morris personally, so I have had to draw upon what others have written, and what, by word of mouth, I have had from the lips of those who knew him intimately. Not so, in what will be said about the subject of the present sketch, who must be thought of now, in 1951, as The Reverend Joseph Preston Blades, minister of the Mt. Tabor Presbyterian Church of Columbia, Tennessee, my friend across forty years, whose own words, secured for this life story, will be quoted extensively.



I am undertaking a very difficult task, as a literary venture, since part of this life story will be biography written by me, and part of it, really a large part, will be autobiography of Mr. Blades, quoted directly, but arranged by me as it fits into the various contexts. I have endeavored to give a somewhat continuous chronological, as well as content, history of his life. I requested him to lay aside (for the sake of the information that I needed to give a proper picture of his life) the restraint of modesty and humility (I knew this would be difficult for him to do) and to give me the history of his ministry as to churches served, responsible positions held, etc. The history of his professional life as a minister is largely in his own words. The extent and frequency of the use of the direct quotation presents a problem in composition on the printed page, because I wish to use the first person singular of the personal pronoun, "I," "my," and "me" most of the time for the freedom of narration, rather than the editorial "we" or "the writer" or "the author." I find that, in using the subject-matter with quotation marks, I shall often be compelled to deal with quotations within quotations; however, I hope the reader may be able to distinguish the "I's" of the biographer from the "I's" of the biographee.

When a writer becomes the biographer of another person, especially when there are quite unusual events in the life portrayed, the reader (some readers at least) would like to know the author's competency almost in the legal sense, as the term is used in case of a witness in court: Is the knowledge first-hand, or has it been passed through the mind and

mouth or the pen of some one else? I believe I shall satisfy the mind of the critical reader as to the authorship first—even at the risk of displeasing the less critical reader who wants to get on with the story and the high points of interest which justify the author in putting the story into print.

On the invitation of President T. C. Reade I came into the faculty of Taylor University in 1897, after a few years spent in teaching and administration in the public schools of Indiana. My teaching in Taylor was first largely in what was then called the Normal Department. In 1902 Dr. C. L. Clippinger, Dean of the College, broke in health, and I was asked to take over the responsibilities of that office. In 1906, having an invitation to become the Dean of a new institution just opening with encouraging prospects near Oskaloosa, Iowa, I accepted the invitation of that institution. In the four years there I came to hold, along with my Dean's office, that of Acting President, and finally of President. I resigned from the presidency of that institution, not knowing where I would be going. Dr. Monroe Vayhinger had become President of Taylor in March, 1908, and, hearing of my resignation from the presidency of the Iowa institution, invited me to return to my former place in the faculty of Taylor as Dean. Hence, in September, 1910, after four years away, I returned to Taylor.

In the student body there was a colored man who had enrolled in the Academy (then a part of the Taylor educational structure) in September of the previous year. He had a good command of the English language and showed a degree of maturity in age and conduct beyond his registered classification. On con-

sulting the records in the Registrar's office, I found that he had registered in the Academy in September, 1909, giving the following data: Joseph Preston Blades, from Barbados, British West Indies; Mother's name, Rachel Blades.

Since I have written so much to establish my competency as his biographer, I must now, after telling that we first met in the fall of 1910, when he had already spent one year on the campus, relate that he remained through the courses of both the Academy and the College, graduating from the Academy in 1914, and from the College with the A. B. degree in June, 1918. During all that time I was Dean of the College and, really, had other duties that gave me close contact with the students of both the Academy and the College; such as assigning rooms for living quarters, the assigning and administration of student labor. Because Mr. Blades had to make his way largely by his labor for the school and by what he could earn through the summer months away from the school when it was not in session, he put in five years on the four-year high school work of the Academy and some entrance work for the Academy. In this period were included two very important subjects, English grammar and advanced arithmetic, to bridge across from the English colonial school system to the American high school work, and at the same time better prepare him for the language and mathematics ahead.

I trust what I have said about my personal acquaintance with Mr. Blades in the teacher-student relation across eight of the nine years he spent in the Academy and College courses of Taylor will furnish some ground for confidence in my interpretation of



his life as it was observed in these important years. The events of these years, both on the campus and off, as he went out from the school to preach or to speak of the life of the people of his native island, will be presented in their proper place in the narrative. For the events before his entering Taylor and for most of the details of his life since his leaving this institution, the narrative will be largely in his own words. My work as editor will be largely the placement, to give in some cases logical, and in others, chronological, order, and where possible, both. We return now to his earlier life in the island of Barbados. Our real story begins.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY LIFE

**J**OSEPH PRESTON BLADES lived his early years on the little island of Barbados, one of the British West Indies. From this point I shall quote from a letter he wrote to me when I requested information about his early life. He writes:—

“As I sit and think of my Alma Mater, Taylor University, and what she has done for me, there comes a long train of events which are forcing themselves upon my mind in respect to this great University and my relationship to it. It is fitting that I should state some of these events—such as, how did I come to know of Taylor University, and how did I become one of her students. I should say here that dates are not recorded because I had no idea that these things would ever come true, so I will write of events as they come to me. I should say that these events are just as fresh in my mind as though they had just happened.

#### FIRST KNOWLEDGE OF TAYLOR AND OF SAMUEL MORRIS

“First, it was on a light, sunny day in Barbados, British West Indies, where I was born, that the name of Taylor University came to me. I was walking down the road one day and saw a page of paper in the road. How it got there, I do not know; and what makes it most significant is that the place I lived in was not



thickly populated, neither was it near a city. I lived thirteen miles from Bridgetown, the capital. I noticed on the head of the paper it said 'Taylor University.' I began to read the story which told of the life of Samuel Morris. I read and reread the story of this life. Finally I said I would like to go to that University where this young man had gone. This seemed fantastic, for I did not know where Taylor University was, only that it was in America. Neither had I any money to get there.

"It is to my Grandfather I owe my inclination towards the ministry. He was a very religious man and I spent the beginning of my life with him. He often read the first Morning's lesson in the Episcopal Church. One day I found in the house a booklet on the life of George Whitefield, the great English preacher. The reading of this booklet was another way God used in leading me into the ministry.

"I planned to go to St. Lucia to a brother of mine to work to earn money to go to America to get an education; and while reading my Bible I was led to read the 43rd chapter of Isaiah, verses 1 and 2.

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

After reading this I burst into tears, and I found myself sobbing loudly. The reason for my weeping was because the verses, to my mind, fitted my case so thoroughly, that I felt God was revealing to me that though I was crossing the ocean, He would not

leave me; and in any trial that would come up He would deliver me. It was about midnight, and I heard my Mother also crying. Then I heard my Grandfather call out to my Mother, saying to her, 'Do not break your heart for that boy; let him go, for we will never meet again.' Just then I lifted up my heart to my Heavenly Father, asking Him not to take anyone out of the family till we could meet again.

"With the assurance that He would not, I left home very early that morning and landed in St. Lucia two days after. Here again God showed Himself strong in my behalf in leading me safe to my journey's end.

#### LIFE IN ST. LUCIA

"After arriving in Saint Lucia, I worked in a blacksmith shop with my brother Johnny for about two years; after which I was put in charge of the shop for a year.

"At this time I came in contact with a young man named Edwin Scarritt, who was a member of the Christian Mission I attended. He was in charge of the bakery which baked and delivered all the bread for the armies and navies. Later brother Scarritt made it possible for me to get a job in the bakery, where I worked three years. Brother Scarritt and I roomed together over the bakery. One night while sitting at the table about half past six or seven we were eating supper. I stopped and said to brother Scarritt, 'I feel that some one at home is praying for me just now.' He said to me, 'How do you know?' I replied, 'I feel it in my soul.' Nothing more was said, but a few days afterward I received a letter from home saying that they were praying for me that very night and at the same

hour when I felt it. Strange as it may be it is real; for I am a great believer in prayer.

### RETURN HOME

"After spending six years in St. Lucia with no thought of going back home, God seemed to say to me to get ready to go home. This was on a Monday, so I said to my friend brother Scarritt, 'I am going home, Wednesday, on the Royal Mail Steamer.' He opened his eyes and asked, 'Why?' I said to him that I was going to die, or someone at home, because God had promised over six years ago that He would not take anyone out of the family till we could meet again. I landed at home two days after leaving St. Lucia and found every one well. And that Grandfather who thought so much of me, and I of him, threw his arms around me and, ah, he wept and I wept; for God was true to His promise. No one was taken out of the family, for I found every one well.

### OFF AGAIN—VISION

"Six weeks later I left home for Colon, in the Canal Zone, where I stayed three months with a Christian friend, Walter Holder, whom I knew in St. Lucia. I was unable to find a job, so he advised me to go to Boca del Toro. I took ship at once, and on board the ship that night I had a strange vision. I had put my head down on a canvas on the deck, prepared to go to sleep. Suddenly I saw a fine-looking man, tall and slender, with a kindly face. A voice said to me, 'This is the man you should associate with.' I awoke, but it did not appear to me that I had been asleep. The next morning I landed in Boca del Toro. During the day I went into a dry goods store, and there I saw a clerk



who was the identical man I saw in my vision on the ship. I went up to him and said, 'Friend, this is strange to me. In coming over here on ship I had a vision and you are the identical man in the vision.' Then I told him of a voice and what the voice said—that he was the man I should associate with. I asked him where was his native home. He said he was from Bluefield, Nicaragua. I found he had been only three months in Boca del Toro, and had succeeded in getting a job in the Dreydon Dry Goods Store. His name was Dixon. At this time I was penniless and he supplied all my need until I got a job. He was a fine Christian gentleman and we became fast friends.

"Here I received a letter informing me of the death of my grandfather. Yes, God is true to His word. I told my friend of the death and the previous circumstances relating to my departure from home, and how my prayer was answered.

#### BACK TO BARBADOS—TO U. S. A.

"I remained three years in Boca del Toro, working at blacksmithing for the United Fruit Co. There I had a good job, received good pay, and saved enough to pay passage back home and thence to the U. S. A. I put \$500 in the bank in Barbados and gave my mother the bank book, as it was all for her. I started from home, bound for God's Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio, upon the advice of C. E. Moulton, a missionary of Barbados. I was kindly accepted by the Bible School. It was there I saw my first winter and my first snow. Here I registered for Bible Studies in the fall of 1906 and remained two years in school and one year a bread baker for the school."



## CHAPTER III

### STUDENT AT TAYLOR UNIVERSITY

I HAVE previously mentioned the time of the student life of Joseph Blades in Taylor Academy and College 1909-18. On the campus he was familiarly called Joe Blades, and hereafter in this sketch I shall, sometimes simply for brevity and natural simplicity of narrative, speak of him as Joe. I should say however, as a general observation, that the practice of teachers and officers in the class room or in professional relationships was to address our students as "Mr." and "Miss," so we addressed him as Mr. Blades. As he was a mature man, and a ready speaker of good English, having had the advantages of common school education in the English public schools of a British island possession, he could with propriety, have had the title "Reverend" as far as interests, habits, bearing, and conduct in general are concerned. What he has told us in his own account of his life before coming to Taylor University shows that he was a devout Christian, with a depth and maturity of Christian experience beyond that of most of the students of Taylor. I do not know at what stage of his life and by what religious society or denomination he received formal ordination to the Christian ministry but whether he had the ceremonial stamp or not, he surely had the gifts and graces of a true minister of our Lord and Savior. For brevity we shall leave off the "Reverend" in using his name, unless in mention-

ing him in his later years it might seem improper not to attach it.

## A SPIRITUAL FORCE

In speaking of Joe's life on the campus, I can say he was so humble, courteous and kind, that I believe every one in the student body and faculty loved him and had great respect for him as a Christian gentleman in the true sense of that term; and recognized in him more than an ordinary depth of spirituality. He was a positive spiritual force in the school. When he led in public prayer, his distinct articulation, his clear tenor voice mellowed with tenderness, his easy flow of simple but beautiful language, the flexibility of modulation and emphasis, as if face to face with the Divine, made it a real leading in prayer, because it had an attraction and kindling power in others that lifted their aspirations, and they really emotionally blended their prayers with his. He was not loud and boisterous, but earnest, articulate, and meaningful, so that the group or company in which he was supposed to be "leading in prayer" could follow its meaning and its emotional tone; it was not a mere monotonous droning, so inarticulate that no rational content could be understood more than a very few feet away, and tending to put to sleep those who were expected to unite in the prayer. As I remember Joe, his prayers in the various aspects of motive—adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession—inspired the same moods and motives in those who heard him; so that those who were spiritually sensitive, and joined him sympathetically, felt when he had prayed, they also had prayed in the same Spirit. Later in the story of his student life I shall tell of a special incident in which

the characteristic just mentioned was noticeably present.

Relevant to Joe's religious life in Taylor are some incidents which he relates by my urgent request for him to give, and which, but for my urgency, his humility would not have permitted him to relate. In fact, the reader must keep in mind throughout this narrative that I have requested him, for the sake of having a true and authentic representation, to risk what might otherwise appear as a lack of humility. What incidents I am about to relate in Joe's own words largely are mentioned by him in connection with the friendships made while in Taylor. Since these incidents relate directly to his campus life and the joy coming to him later, in its fruition, even "as bread upon the waters," I give them in this connection. These show that his religious life was fruitful in action as well as in petition and worship.

#### SOME FRIENDSHIPS MADE AT TAYLOR

In enumerating memories of Taylor University he says: "Another significant thing about Taylor University was the friendships among the students. I remember a young woman who was a student—the older one of two sisters named T——, with whom one day I had a very serious talk about her life work. I did not know my talk to her meant so much until two years later when she wrote me at Drew Seminary: 'I am sure you will be glad to know that I am called to go to Africa as a missionary, and I am on my way there.' For this I rejoiced in my Heavenly Father for His gracious love in using me to help others to find themselves."



I am including in this sketch of Joe's life at Taylor another incident, which I quote from his statement as follows: "There was a young woman, very beautiful, sent by her parents to attend Taylor University. She broke the rules of the school; she refused to attend prayer meetings; in fact did not attend any religious meetings. I met her one day and had a very helpful talk with her. I told her how the Dean, the President, Miss Miller, and everybody else in Taylor wished her well, and were concerned about her. I asked her if she would like it if I should write to her mother about her behavior on the campus, and how she broke the rules. I talked to her about forty-five minutes in front of the Sammy Morris Building, and when I left her, I sent up a prayer for her. A year after that, while I was at Drew Seminary, I received a letter from her in which she said: 'Mr. Blades, you will never know the good your talk did to me that day. I am sure you will be glad to know that I am now a Christian and a preacher's wife.'

"The friends made round and about Taylor, for about twelve to eighteen miles, will never be forgotten; for these friends were Taylor's friends too—such as Mr. George Frazier, who lived out in the country near Warren, Indiana. Every summer he would write me at Taylor University and say, 'Brother Blades, come over and bring a book with you to canvass. There is a horse and buggy here at your pleasure to carry you around.' This offer was accepted, and wherever I went, although there were no negroes in the community, I was welcomed and accepted because of George Frazier's horse and buggy; for everyone knew this to be 'Uncle George's' horse and buggy. The



horse and buggy seemed to make an introduction for me to the hearts and doors of the people.

"In Marion, Indiana, lived Mr. and Mrs. David Morrell, whose place I called home. Their doors were opened to me at any time, day or night. I had only to get into town, go to a telephone and call, and the answer always was, 'Come home, the doors are all open.'

"How well do I remember making my Prayer to God in the language of this great hymn of consecration:

Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
Take my moments and my days;  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise;  
Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love;  
Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King.  
Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.  
Take my silver and my gold;  
Not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my intellect, and use  
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine;  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart, it is Thine own;  
It shall be Thy Royal throne.  
Take my love my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure-store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee."

In narrating these incidents and the blessings coming from these precious friendships, Brother Blades thrusts the above memory of his own deep heart response to God in between two friendship paragraphs.

This only shows how still, in his late years, his life is permeated with deep consecration and spontaneous expression of gratitude.

Continuing on the subject of his friends he says: "One of the lasting friendships of the good old Taylor family is Burton Oppen and his wife Hazel, who have been our guests whenever they were in reach of us. How well do I remember the four days The Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Oppen spent in our home at Bowling Green, Ky., upon their first furlough home from India. Both of them spoke to appreciative audiences, and Mrs. Oppen, to groups of women, telling of their mission work in India. Since then whenever it was convenient, Rev. Oppen would stop in to visit us.

#### AN ICY EXPERIENCE OF A TORRID ZONER

"Varied were the experiences I had at Taylor University. I remember one very wintry day, right after dinner, I went out from the dining hall; there was a sheet of ice underneath an apple tree, where a pool of water had formed and had frozen over. I saw the ice all right, but seeing others skating over it, I tried to do likewise, but to my sorrow, I fell and broke my cheekbone. Some of the boys saw when I fell. They rushed to pick me up and led me to the chemistry laboratory. They poured water on my head to stop the bleeding, for I bled profusely through the nose. When the blood was stopped a little they called a doctor who was one mile away. He came and stood about three feet from where I was lying on the bed. He kept gazing at me but never touched me, and left without saying a word. Professor Robert E. Brown, who was my chemistry teacher, came to my room two times a day with a little vial with something in it. He anointed

the injured place, and said nature would gradually pull the broken bone back to its right place; and so it did.\*

"Three weeks later, when I was able to be out, I met the same doctor on the street. He looked at me and asked, 'Are you the same fellow that fell?' I answered, 'Yes.' He shook his head and went on. I often wondered whether he was not afraid to touch negroes.

---

\* This reference to Professor Robert E. Brown (later Robert E. Brown, M. D.) is an illustration of his genuine human kindness, and prophetic of a wonderful benevolent career in the science and art of healing, toward which he was looking and working for a few years in teaching chemistry and other sciences at Taylor. He came on the teaching staff in 1910, at the same time I returned from my four years in Iowa. Besides his teaching he served as Registrar. As I was Dean of the College, Dr. Brown and I spent many hours together on school problems. His life purpose—to give his life to Medical Missionary work in China—made his connection with the Taylor staff all too brief, three years, I believe, and they were constructive in service. He took his medical work and degree in the school of Medicine of the University of Michigan; then off to China.

The older of his two sons, born on the Taylor campus, is now Willis E. Brown, M. D., Professor and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the University of Arkansas School of Medicine, Little Rock. Having been out of direct touch with Dr. Robert Brown, the father, after the early years of the Second World War, and hearing that he was no longer living, I wrote the son for information, and in a letter of June 20, 1950, he gave me information from which I quote the following: "My father went to China in 1917 and served there in varying capacities, except for furlough periods, until December, 1946, when he returned to this country following the war with Japan. His services in China included medical administration to the Chinese Government, the building of mission hospitals, and serving with the Chinese and American Armies. He died in May of 1948 in Los Angeles, California."

This extended note will be justified by Mr. Blades, and many readers of this sketch, perhaps, who have read of his great services to Christian Missions in China and the great services rendered to the Chinese Government.



## FAMILY SPIRIT IN TAYLOR

"I often thought I had the good will of all the Taylor family, not only of the students, but also of the professors.

"Well do I remember Professor Lee, and the good times we used to have in playing croquet together. He was very sympathetic toward me and there were others whom I can never forget—Professors Cobb, Miller, Olmstead and Draper. Taylor was then a place where the family spirit existed, and each one took an interest in the other. I have spoken so much of the family relationship because I feel that spirit is so necessary in any college, and especially when it is designated as a Christian college or university.

"To make this plain: Mothers and fathers would send their daughters to Taylor because they were sure of the protection which was given them. This was not only true of the young women, but also of the young men. To illustrate here what I mean: It happened one night after supper was served, between five and six o'clock, that several young men left the campus and went to Marion, Ind., which is 15 miles away, thinking that they could escape the vigilant care of Dean Ayres. But they found out it could not be done. How the Dean knew it, I do not know; but when the train from Marion pulled into the station at Upland at two o'clock, a.m., the Dean was there to meet them. They saw him, and as the train came to a stop these young men jumped off and scampered to the campus. It was then I knew something was wrong, for I heard a low tapping on my door. The tap awoke me out of a sound sleep and I asked who it was. A voice replied, 'It is I, the Dean.' I then cracked open



the door, and he asked me if the young men who roomed across from me were in their rooms after supper. I said I did not think they were, because there was no light in their room since supper. He replied he knew that, rather thought they were out, as he had an idea that they had gone to Marion, so he went down to meet them.

“When I learned this, I said to myself, what care is taken, even of the young men, at Taylor! I also said, I knew the Dean’s two sons were in their beds; yet what watchful care he was taking of somebody else’s sons. From that hour I had a profound love and respect for Dean Ayres and the family relationship which existed at Taylor University.”

#### IMPRESS OF GREAT SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Mr. Blades writes me with highest praise and appreciation of Dr. Monroe Vayhinger, whose presidency of Taylor University covered the period from March, 1908, to June, 1921, Joe’s nine years at Taylor falling entirely within this period. I am quoting from Joe, in this connection, one incident which occurred at the beginning of Joe’s life in Taylor, and one which occurred at the close. President Vayhinger’s name and action in relation to Joe’s life will come into the picture later in a number of very interesting and significant incidents. Joe’s words follow:

“How well do I remember Dr. Vayhinger for his courteous acts toward me while at Taylor University. I have never met him on the campus but what he did inspire hope and confidence in me. How well do I remember when I undertook to do shoe repairing and Dr. Vayhinger called me to him saying, ‘I have learned

that you are repairing shoes. Come, get my children's shoes and repair them. The job when finished was not so well done but they were taken and worn without any complaint. And when repairs were needed again, the shoes were sent to me. This is just to mention one of the sympathetic touches he had toward the student body, which consisted of the Taylor Family.

"When I had finished my college at Taylor, I went to Dr. Vayhinger to tell him I had learned my bill to Taylor was \$200. He said, 'Don't worry about that; I have a friend in Detroit who will pay the balance of your debt.' And I never heard any more about the debt.

"One cannot think of Taylor without thinking of the lives and spirit of those who have made Taylor great. I think now of Bishop Taylor, who, it is said, when he was dying asked to be put on his knees in order that he might spend his last moments on earth praying for Taylor University. So now the spirit of that great man of God hovers over Taylor. Also the spirit of Dr. Reade, who was contemporary with Bishop Taylor, still prevails."

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMER VACATION EXPERIENCES— RACE PREJUDICE

“THE first summer, in fact, most of the summers, after I entered Taylor were spent in lecturing on the customs and habits of the people of Barbados. During these summers I met with various experiences.

“The first trying experience, related to race prejudice, occurred in Muncie, Indiana. Here I met Dr. Leslie Naftzger, District Superintendent of the Muncie District of the Methodist Episcopal Church (as it was before uniting with the other two branches of Methodists) to whom I had been referred by his brother, pastor of the M. E. Church at Wabash, Indiana, in whose church I had made my first lecture. Dr. Leslie Naftzger, the District Superintendent, was a member of the Board of Trustees of Taylor University at this time. One Saturday I went to Dr. Naftzger’s home, telling him I was a student of Taylor University and would appreciate an opportunity to lecture in his church. He said very kindly, ‘Brother Blades, I have no church, as I am a District Superintendent of the Muncie District. But if you will come up to the church (naming it) where the Ministerial Association meets on Monday morning, I will introduce you to the ministers and ask them to open their doors to you.’ I complied with his advice and was promptly present at the meeting on Monday morning. The Min-



isterial Association opened and began a discussion on the problems of the day. I was asked to take part in the discussion and did so.

"At the close of the business of the day, Dr. Naftzger told the ministers I was a student working my way through college by lecturing on Barbados and asked them to assist me by giving me a chance to speak in their churches. One minister, a Dr. Little, also a trustee of Taylor, promised me an opportunity to speak in his church at some future date.

"The meeting closed and I left. I had gotten about two blocks away when I heard someone calling me. Then I turned to meet the man who was beckoning to me. He told me the District Superintendent had told them they were to take me with them to dinner in Muncie. (The District Superintendent lived there and went home for dinner.) We went to a restaurant and all sat at a long table, about 18 of us. I knew nothing of the customs and habits of the restaurants in Muncie, but I was invited by these ministers. We sat for a very long time, waiting for the food to be served. I was the surprised one, for I couldn't understand why it should take so long for the food to be brought to the table, not knowing the mind of the proprietor or of the ministers. Then the waiter came to me and whispered in my ear, 'Will you eat at the counter?' But I ignored him, as if I did not hear him. So he left me for a little while. Then he came again and repeated the same question. At this time I glanced around the table at the ministers to see what they would say or do. The waiter then left me. And the third time he asked again, 'Would you mind eating at the counter?' I said to him, 'Why?' He replied, 'We do not feed colored folk at the table.' I told him it was very



strange; that these ministers had invited me, and if he fed them he would have to feed me too. Then the food came on. After I had eaten, even then, the ministers said nothing. And I said to myself, 'Is this religion?' And I made this observation, 'If I had taken my dog there, I would have vindicated him. But those ministers said not a murmuring word.'

"One summer I left Taylor University for Indianapolis. At a religious institution where I went to put up for the night I met a Japanese by the name of R. Takemaye, a former student of Taylor University. We introduced ourselves. He was very happy to know I was from Taylor because he was a Taylorite, too. We made plans at once to go around lecturing together, he in his native costume, and I in mine. As he was better known than I was, he was advance agent securing the engagements for us. The climax of our few week's work together was in a very large Methodist Church in New Castle, Ind., where we had a very large and appreciative audience. Here again the spirit of Taylor was manifested to the world.

"Another summer at Connersville, Ind., I was selling Bible symbols. I went to a home, and while I was talking to the lady of the house, a mail carrier came up. Upon hearing me speak to the woman, he abruptly interrupted the conversation by seizing my hand, shaking it warmly, while saying, 'You are from Barbados.' I turned to him with surprise, asking, 'How in the world did you know it?' He replied, 'I spent many days in your capital, Bridgetown, and was treated as a lord.' Then he turned to the woman, who was his wife, and said, 'Treat this man as you would any white man, for I was treated royally in his home town.' Again he turned to me and said, 'How do the

white people treat you?" I replied, 'Sometimes kindly, and sometimes otherwise.' Then he advised me to always let people know I was not an American negro, but a West Indian. But I replied, pointing to the color of my hand, 'How could I do differently, for this proves I am one of them.'

"I had two interesting experiences in Noblesville, Ind., one summer. A very hot summer day I saw a sign on the hospital which read, 'Baths, 50c, 75c, and \$1.00.' I went to the clerk in the office and asked if it were possible for me to take a bath there. She said, 'Of course.' I told her I would first go to my rooming place to get a change of garments. On my return I went to the man in charge of the baths. He said to me, 'We can't mix them up like that.' I asked what he meant. He still refused. I then went to the head doctor, telling him what the clerk had said and how the bath-keeper acted. He said for me to go back to the bath-keeper and tell him to get my bath ready at once. This he did quickly and there was no further trouble.

"The second experience that summer in the same town happened a little later. I was selling and taking orders for Japanese paintings and dress patterns, canvassing from door to door, and had taken many orders from the wealthy and well-to-do people in town. They were very pleasant and sympathetic toward me as a student from the West Indies attending Taylor University, so they ordered readily.

"At one place which I canvassed, after just a few words on my part, the woman very abruptly said she did not want anything. So I left and went down the street. She notified her husband, who was a policeman, unknown to me. After going a short distance on another street I met a little boy who asked, 'Mister,

are you canvassing?" I said 'Yes.' He said, 'The police are looking for you.' I changed my course and went to the bus station. The policeman followed me there. He asked if I was canvassing and said the mayor had sent him to apprehend me. He took me to the mayor's office. The mayor asked who I was, where I was from, and what I was doing. I told him I was from the West Indies and a student working my way through Taylor University. Then the mayor said he would charge me \$15.00, which I paid him. All this was in spite of the fact I had told him I was only taking orders mostly and the few things I was selling could not be duplicated in the local stores.

"With my \$15 gone, I went back to three very wealthy people I had sold to. One was a lawyer's wife, named Kane. She asked with surprise, 'Did the mayor really take your money? Did you tell him who you were, what you were doing and that you were a Taylor University student?' I answered, 'Yes.' She said then, 'I'll ask my husband to see him about this.'

"Another customer I went back to see was a wealthy citizen whose son was a student at DePauw University. When I told them what had happened, they, too, were incensed about it. The young man said, 'I'm going to see the mayor this very day.'

"The next day as I passed the bank, the mayor was sitting in the bank and called to me, asking me, 'Why didn't you tell me who you were?' Of course I replied I had done that exactly. He said, 'You have made it pretty hard for me.' So he gave me back \$10 of the money, saying the balance of \$5 was 'on the book,' and I couldn't get that. Just what he meant by that I could never figure out, because legally, there was no case. The mayor asked me to go back to my patrons and



tell them he had returned my money. But I did not do that.

“Other summers I spent doing various jobs, such as working in Benjamin’s Brass Foundry in Detroit, preaching in Alliance and Youngstown, Ohio.

“One summer we had a Jew named Harris who lectured to the student body for some days. He went to Marion, Ind., one Saturday to preach on Sunday, and I also went there to preach that Sunday. After preaching that night, when I boarded the street car, I found Mr. Harris on the same car. We were both on our way back to Taylor University. Mr. Harris said, ‘Let us both stop downtown and get something to eat.’ I said I wasn’t hungry. He persisted in persuading me to accompany him. Then I had to tell him I was not really hungry, but if he insisted upon my going with him, he wouldn’t get any service. He was amazed and could scarcely believe it. I told him if he could bear it I was willing to be practiced on. So we went into the first restaurant. They told him they wouldn’t feed him so long as he was with me. He then refused their service alone. I said, ‘Let us go home.’ He said, ‘No, let us try another.’ We went to another and were again turned down. I said, ‘Let’s go home.’ ‘No,’ said he. ‘Let us try another.’ We then went to a restaurant in a basement and were finally served. So he said to me, ‘Blades, I did not have any idea that this could happen in Marion, Ind.’ We reached Taylor University at 2:00 a.m. Monday. These were rich experiences for me, which I treasure dearly.

“One summer the University sent out students two by two to various parts of the country to invite students and make friends for Taylor. Basil Osborne and I went to his home town, Brighton, Pa. In our visiting

we had the privilege of being in the home of Senator White, who was very cordial to us. He inquired very kindly of my home, Barbados, British West Indies, and of Taylor University, which we were representing."

## CHAPTER V

### FROM LOSS TO GAIN

**I**N THIS chapter will be related events which, more than any other part of the life of Mr. Blades as related to the history of Taylor University, furnished the ground for the author's decision to write this biography. The story has never been published, even in the literature of Taylor University, hence is known by very few. Even few, if any, of the students contemporary with Mr. Blades, ever heard the story of these events from his own lips. In fact he did not know, nor did any one know, while he was in Taylor, the significant results of the incidents as they have affected, and are still affecting the material welfare of Taylor University; and no one can estimate the far-reaching spiritual consequences.

I have secured from Mr. Blades the story of the incidents referred to, and will now give it in his own words, with the exception that, for good editorial reasons, I have not given the names of a certain person and place; this deletion, however, in no way affects the vital truth elements of the narrative. Mr. Blades writes:—"As I have elsewhere mentioned, a number of my summers while attending Taylor were spent in lecturing in churches in the vicinity, and by sometimes selling Japanese paintings. What I am about to relate took place in a city of Indiana. Two months of my summer vacation were almost gone. I had only one more month before it was time to start



back to college for my next year at Taylor. Then came a crisis in my life which I will never forget. In my going around lecturing I had accumulated seventy-five dollars and it was all in paper money in my purse. Here comes the best of it. It was at this time I took fourteen collars to a Chinese laundryman to be done up. I gave him the collars and he gave me a slip of paper to present when I called back for my collars. I took out my purse with the \$75 and in talking with the Chinese man I left it in the store on his counter. I went out of the laundry, and got on the street car which stopped very near his door. I had not gone half a block when I discovered what had happened. I told the conductor and he stopped the car. I went back to the laundry and told the Chinese man what had happened. He said he could not understand English. There I was without money in S——, Indiana.

“A couple of days after I had left my purse in the Chinese laundry I met a gentleman on the street. He knew me or knew of me, but I did not know him. He said to me, ‘I have been looking for you. We want you to come and lecture at our church.’ He then said, ‘I heard you have lost \$75.’ I said to him, ‘I know that Chinese man has my money but that is over with, and thank God I do not have the least bit of animosity in my heart for him.’ That Christian gentleman said to me, ‘Sir, that is worth seventy-five dollars.’ That statement brought the greatest joy to my troubled heart. I lectured at this man’s church that week and they gave me \$17. Here I got a new start.

“It was the Monday of the next week as I was going down the street that I saw a white lady sitting on a porch. I went up to her and asked her if she would

be interested in some lovely Japanese paintings. She said no. I told her of my misfortune. She said she saw an account of it in the morning paper and was sorry to learn of it. I told her I was from the West Indies and going to school at Taylor University, training myself for missionary work in Africa, and I would go when I had completed my education. She invited me into her living room and she talked to me about Africa and its opportunity for missionary work. When I was prepared she was to keep me as a missionary in Africa. Here God was working out His permissible will for Taylor University through the misfortune which I had. At first I could not see how the contact could have been made by me with such a wealthy woman, unless God was working out His plan through me that I knew nothing of.

"I then said to her, 'Mrs. W——, did you attend the Billy Sunday meeting when he was here?' She burst into tears and I asked why she was crying. She then told me the sad story of her husband's sudden death. They both decided to go to the Billy Sunday meeting. Her husband went upstairs and got ready before she did. After getting himself ready he came down stairs and lay on the lounge. When she got down stairs she found him dead. Yes, this was a very sad story. What could I say, what could I do to dry those falling tears? I looked to God, for I knew that He would tell me what to say, and he did. I said to her, 'Mrs. W——, you Americans have something over here that we do not have at our home. That is, you have something you call Home Coming. That is a day when the children, near relatives and distant relations return home. That is a day when loved ones meet and greet each other and tell of the good times they used to have.'

Then I said to her, 'God so planned for us a Home Coming and if your husband died a Christian, there will be a great Home Coming for you and him, and what a reunion that will be!' Instantly her sadness turned to smiles. I left Mrs. W——and she did not give to me one penny. She only said she would keep me as a missionary when I went to Africa. So I said goodbye to this pleasant wealthy lady. When I got back to Taylor to take up my fall work, I found a check waiting for me for \$50. It was from Mrs. W——.

"Six months later I went to Dr. Monroe Vayhinger and asked him to go to Mrs. W—— and tell her that I sent him to her. 'Tell her that I said to turn the money over to Taylor University that she was going to give me to keep me as a missionary in Africa. Tell her that by helping me out she will be only helping one person out. But by helping Taylor University out she will be helping hundreds of young men and women to go as missionaries to all parts of the world.' This has really come true, and Dr. B. W. Ayres, who was then Dean, can complete this story by telling you what Mrs. W—— has done for Taylor University up to date. She has passed to her reward, but her good work is still living on."

#### A WISE STEWARDESS OF WEALTH

As suggested by Mr. Blades I shall relate some of the very significant results of the loss of the purse with its contents, and the consequent detention in that city, for further sales of the Japanese paintings, which brought him into touch with Mrs. W——. It will be noticed in Mr. Blade's account of his interview with her that she committed herself, as a missionary-minded woman, to the support of him when he had



entered upon his work as a missionary, but she did not give him there, "one penny." She was the widow of a wealthy business man, and she, in the course of life in a business environment, had learned worldly wisdom—not to take too much for granted when dealing with total strangers. So she wrote to the office of Taylor University to see if he was worthy of her confidence and help. She immediately got a reply recommending him as thoroughly reliable and worthy. She then sent the \$50 check to Taylor to help him on his college expenses. She also, after this acquaintance with Taylor, helped some other students in preparation for missionary service.

This good woman made gifts directly to the school on special appeals for help. I personally have very clear recall of an event of great importance to the school, which occurred a year or two after Mr. Blades had graduated from the college course at Taylor and gone to Drew Theological Seminary. Mr. O. W. Outland, a resident of Upland, did part-time soliciting of funds for Taylor, most of it in the local county, Grant, but also in most of the counties bordering Grant. In the town of Warren, Huntington County, he was able to interest a good liberal Christian woman, named Mrs. Martha McGrew, in the purchase for Taylor of the 70 acres of farmland, the remainder of an 80 acre tract out of the corner of which the original 10-acre campus of Taylor University had been purchased by the Upland Land Company and given to the University at the time of its removal from Fort Wayne. The school had great need for this land, for most of the students boarded in the school's boarding hall, and they needed a large supply of milk from the school's own dairy. The price at which the 70 acres could be bought was

\$7000. Mrs. McGrew was giving \$5000, if the school would secure gifts for the remaining \$2000. We thought that, since the price was \$100 an acre, it would be well for us to solicit a number of friends of the college to take an acre each. The first letter, as I remember, was written by me to Mrs. W—— and she immediately responded with a \$100 check. What other gifts were secured from her by our field solicitors across the years I can not remember now with sufficient definiteness to mention.

The great benefaction of this good woman, however, was by bequest, and I feel that the acquaintance with Taylor which led to making it one among a number of institutions and causes, as residuary legatees, was through this strange providential incident in which Mr. Blades figured in a peculiar sense as God's medium of influence. President Vayhinger, who carried to her the message of which Mr. Blades has spoken above, no doubt had some influence toward the inclusion of Taylor University in the will, but the original contact and interest was in the incident already narrated.

#### THAT PORCH MEETING—AN INTERPRETATION

In what seemed to be, that summer day, just the casual and ordinary meeting of a house-to-house salesman of small wares, and the resting mistress of a mansion, probably preferring to be undisturbed in her reflecting loneliness, there were involved great and far-reaching consequences—yes, the destiny of many souls, no doubt. On that stone-mansion porch, embodied poverty and embodied wealth met—the former, no doubt, with hesitant, timid but prayerful, all but helpless, approach; the latter almost repellent in

a bereavement which the bewilderment of much wealth with its responsibility only seems to intensify. But at the center of her personality was the great Christian passion to get the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. Hence, when the salesman became to her fundamentally the potential and prospective missionary, she invited him into the house, and pledged herself for his support as he has related; and while she showed the wise procedure of a business woman in not giving him money there, as an uncredentialed stranger, she did, after learning of his worthiness, send money to help him in his school expenses.\*

Strange, isn't it! In the Kingdom of Grace, the unity of the true Church, we are members one of another. Here were two souls, about as far apart by the artificial and merely natural and accidental qualities, as two persons could be, each having suffered a loss—a great loss, as related to the status and environment of each. In the providence of God, sorrow, that great leveller in the human order, brought these two good souls together in an attempt to unite as seller and buyer, involving a few cents, but which terminated in a transaction of mutual encouragement at the time, and far-reaching consequences for future time and eternity.

It may help us to appreciate how God works in the preservation, increase, and transmutation of values,

---

\* The reader may ask, "Did Mr. Blades go to Africa as a missionary?" No, but he made more than one application to a church Board yet the way never opened. We may speculate on the reason—color, age as he finished seminary, more candidates at that time than there was money to support. But his generous spirit in asking Mrs. W—— to turn her gifts to Taylor has greatly multiplied his missionary ministry, while he has carried on important Kingdom work in America.



if we carry reflection on this case into further details. Here was a young man, far from home, his island country, in this vast country and among strangers; of a race often in this country treated with heart-breaking contempt; but doggedly carrying on through the long years of preparation, looking to the future years of financial struggle yet ahead, to realize the preparation he set out to achieve. Here he was with the last dollar of his summer's earnings swept away by theft; stripped of all material resources for school expenses, and the few social amenities money might permit him to have as a negro student. But here he was starting anew, with the grace of God and a will consecrated to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, his Lord. On the plane of commerce, with sorrow, and a sense of need and of loss, he met this woman of commerce and wealth, but bereft of something beyond wealth—her husband. Loss faced loss, each great and poignant in its own social frame of reference. Need faced need and reciprocally each had resources to give comfort and help to the other. The white woman of years, clothed in the conventional garb of sorrow and bereavement, rich in things as well as having the Pearl of Great Price, was able to give new courage to the young black man, even though she did not buy his Japanese pictures. The penniless young negro, clothed with the Comforter, was able to speak the words that assuaged her grief and dried her tears. He needed the means of carrying on with most of life ahead and she offered it. She needed the comfort of the world to come and received it from the young colored minister, who stopped at her porch as seller of pictures. He left with her not a Japanese picture, but a picture of a

Heavenly Reunion with her loved one, and also a new courage to make her material wealth bless the world.

### HER WORKS DO FOLLOW—THE BEQUEST

We have already covered sufficiently for our purpose the incidents in which Mrs. W—— showed an active interest in Taylor University during her lifetime, and now something must be said about the much greater help for the institution she provided for in her will. The loss of her husband has been mentioned. As a business man's widow with a large estate and no children, it is safe to infer that her will would be written without many months of delay after her husband's death. It is also fair to assume that the placing of Taylor University among the institutions and causes designated at residuary legatees grew out of this acquaintance with Mr. Blades and his later request sent to her by President Monroe Vayhinger as mentioned in his account.

I have not taken the trouble to get the date of the writing of the will or of the death of Mrs. W——. The events concerning her interest in Taylor University fell in the period of President Vayhinger's administration, 1908-1921. After the brief presidency of six months of James M. Taylor and the acting presidency of eight months of Burt W. Ayres, came the presidency of John Paul, 1922-1931. This was followed by the presidency of Robert Lee Stuart, 1931-1945. I mention these because the will, being very complicated, had to pass through the courts for construction and the determination of what property would be set off as residuary or undesignated part of the estate. Then after a certain valuable income-producing piece of real estate was set aside for the residuary legatees,

it was held intact under the concept of ten shares of which Taylor University holds one. Thus, income resulting from this bequest has continued, at least through most of President Stuart's Administration and thus far into that of President Meredith, 1950, as this is written. The annual income of Taylor University as its share, according to information from the business office, has varied in different years over the wide range of from about \$300 to \$3000. In the trying period of the Second World War and immediately following, it was greatest, and a very substantial help in that trying period. It is hoped that after it becomes necessary to sell and distribute the proceeds to the various institutions each will have a substantial block of permanent endowment. All of these interests are vitally religious and missionary societies or institutions, as I remember them. So this good woman has passed her material wealth on into the redemption of souls—treasures laid up in Heaven. May Taylor be a faithful steward in its missionary investment.

On the campus of Taylor, Joseph Blades made a great spiritual contribution, and since in all circumstances, he gave "such as he had," he has brought to Taylor through his faithfulness to God the "silver and gold" of which in those days he had none to give.



## CHAPTER VI

### EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER

THE preceding chapter had its beginning earlier in the period of the student relation of Mr. Blades to Taylor University than the time of the incident which I shall deal with in this chapter. The events of central interest, in many pages immediately preceding this chapter, were off-campus incidents. The present narrative could very logically have been placed as a final article dealing with other campus events. However, since it occurred in the last semester of his senior year, and it has a factor that gives it logical connection in its significance to the University, I have thought this to be the most appropriate place for it.

Readers who were living at the period of World War I, and who are old enough to be much concerned about privations, will remember that it was a very trying period. It was a great testing-time for colleges, especially small and relatively poorly endowed colleges. So many of Taylor's young men were in the armed services or in work related to the war that income from tuition and fees was very small. Then, too, prices were high and, being a school which furnished rooms and board for most of its students, bills for both heat and food were heavy. A part of the time the fuel administration would not permit us to heat the regular class-rooms and public buildings, and we had to hold classes in residence-halls, dining-room and kitchen, and in some of the near-by faculty resi-

dences. At the time of the event I am soon to mention, I think we had passed the time for using heat in the public buildings and were holding our mid-week all-school prayer meeting in the early evening about 6:30 to 7:30, our accustomed time, between the evening meal and study-hours. President Monroe Vayhinger was feeling keenly the financial pressure upon the school; so, as the regular meeting was adjourning, he requested those who felt like doing so to remain and join him in a time of prayer for the temporal needs of the institution. A number, perhaps a score or more, remained. Mrs. Ayres and I were together as usual in the prayer meeting and I believe both Dr. and Mrs. Vayhinger remained—though I am not sure about Mrs. Vayhinger, for she was State President of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and was much in demand as a speaker, hence she was away much of the time. Brother Blades was there, and anyone who was there, in referring to the meeting afterward, thought of him. Praying was voluntary. There were a few rather brief prayers, and then Brother Blades began to talk to God about our needs. How he did seem to have direct audience with God! He was not bombastic, but so tender and imploring. After he had finished, it seemed that everyone arose, without another word being uttered by anyone, and went away. Those who spoke of it afterward said it seemed that there was no need of further prayer—and it was not just a feeling of laziness or spiritual lethargy.

As I remember (though the exact time is not important for this narrative) it was soon after the close of the regular college-year in June, 1918, that the University received notice of the probating of a will in one of the eastern states in which Taylor University

was made a beneficiary to the extent of \$9000 or \$10,000. (My own memory has carried that across the years as \$9000, but I heard President Vayhinger in public address once give it as \$10,000. The difference in memory might have arisen out of a condition of taxation on bequest, I remembering what the institution actually got, rather than the amount specified in the will.) When I reported to Mrs. Ayres about the provision in the will, she immediately said, "That's the answer to Joe Blades's prayer"; and I said, "That is just what I thought of when the notice came." And when the Vayhingers got the word they reacted with the same thought. President Vayhinger, knowing the time of the prayer-meeting referred to, visited the relatives of this man who had made the bequest and learned that at that time this man was deciding to have his will written but was hesitating about whether to make Taylor University or some other institution the beneficiary, but he did finally decide to make the gift to Taylor.

While I suppose all of us who remained in that prayer-meeting prayed silently and some others led in prayer, it seems that those of us who ever talked about it afterward felt like mentioning the prayer of Joe Blades as "the effectual fervent prayer" that "availed much." It may be that our feeling of finality at the time indicates that he, as leading, and vocally expressing our deepest and best to God, was sympathetically bearing our effectual prayer also. We who have personal knowledge of this event give Joe credit for at least being our advocate in this cause.



## CHAPTER VII

### FROM COLLEGE TO SEMINARY

**I**N JUNE, 1918, Joseph Preston Blades received the degree Bachelor of Arts from Taylor University. As he told you in his own words in a previous chapter, President Vayhinger had secured from a friend of the school money to cover the balance of his school expenses, almost \$200. After his nine years of working, praying and paying his way through the Academy and College of Taylor, he set his face toward the Seminary, with the summer of 1918 intervening. From this point on in his biography I shall have very little direct, first-hand knowledge. Across the years since 1918 I have had only a few contacts with him by letter and through some mutual friend, until 1946, our Taylor Centennial year, when, at my urgent request, he returned to the Taylor campus for the Centennial Celebration at the Commencement time in June. Since that time we have had considerable correspondence relative to this biography.

Now that we have come to the time in his life story when he passes from all educational jurisdiction of mine, with added age, added learning, added travel, and added pulpit experience; and sets his face toward the Seminary for his more distinctive professional training, it will seem that from this point on I should recognize this change by the form of his name, ordinarily writing it Reverend Joseph P. Blades, even if in

my free and spontaneous references I write it plain Joe Blades, or just Joe.

He is now leaving the little village of Upland, Indiana, with its vast surrounding pure air spaces and wide expanses of growing crops, making his way week by week across the intervening states to the city of Madison, New Jersey, with its wide expanses of growing cities where life struggles with life for standing room, near the metropolis of the Western World; and where the vast air spaces are hazy with smoke and dust of industry, and the hum and roar of traffic. Here in Madison, New Jersey, is Drew Seminary, the terminal of his summer journey; and after three more years of study, likely to be the terminal place of his formal education for his life's calling. As suggested above, most of the biography that follows will be in his own words as I have drawn them from him by question and topical suggestions. By the quotation marks on the paragraphs you will know you are reading his own words. After the manner of radio announcers, I now turn you to Reverend Joseph P. Blades:

"In the summer of 1918 I worked in a number of campmeetings in quite a few towns in Ohio—Middletown, Franklin, Youngstown, Alliance, and others.

"After entering Drew Seminary I was fortunate in being assigned the job of mail carrier for the student body.

#### PEACE-MAKER

"One summer, 1919, I was the pastor at the St. John Methodist Episcopal Church at Spring Lake, New Jersey, which is a summer resort. While there I had another strange experience. It was my good fortune

to be instrumental in preventing a serious race riot. I was preparing for church one Sunday evening when one of the women members came to the house to tell me she wasn't going to church that night. Upon my enquiry as to the reason, she said there was going to be a riot at our church. I insisted that the woman should go with me to church. When we reached the church I found it packed and jammed with colored men and women, all very excited and ready for action. Some men tried to hold my attention, but I steadily mounted the pulpit and raised my hand, saying to the audience, 'Be quiet.' Then I was told what had happened.

"A colored woman had undertaken to go bathing in a restricted or segregated bathing pavilion and she and the proprietor had fought. He had her arrested and the colored people of Spring Lake were making a vigorous protest. After hearing them, I said, 'We are a very excitable people. You told me when I came here to preach for you, that your employers here were very nice. And if you will permit me I will go to town early Monday morning to make an investigation of this affair.' The church service then proceeded as usual.

"Early Monday morning I did as I had promised and learned that the woman was not the only one at fault. Later in the day the proprietor of the pavilion phoned me at my rooming place and indignantly assumed that I was the cause of a racial commotion on Sunday night. I then quietly told him he had better tread softly or he, or I, or someone might innocently be killed. Then he told me five armed men had been to the pavilion 'to get him.' I reminded him he had a bell on top of the pavilion which he was to ring to call all the police in case of any disturbance. This he



should have done instead of fighting with the woman.

"Monday night between seven and eight o'clock the phone rang, summoning me to a home where certain men, including three lawyers, were seeking to vindicate the woman's cause. I sat patiently quiet during the investigation, for I had been to Asbury earlier in the day and learned the whole secret of the matter. The three lawyers left and I asked the woman certain questions. She denied them all. I then said to the men present, 'Vindicate the women of your group all you can when right, but first be sure they are right. And when you find out they are otherwise, let things alone.' Then I told them of the facts I had learned, incognito, in Asbury. And the men readily dropped the whole matter. The balance of the time was very pleasant at this summer pastorate.

"I spent one Thanksgiving while in Drew with Walter and Anna Oliver at Cape May, New Jersey. They made it very, very pleasant for me."\*

### MARRIAGE

In earlier chapters of this life-story Mr. Blades told us about his visits to Marion and of good friends in that city. It was here he became acquainted with Miss Lucile Frazier in August, 1916, two years before his graduation from Taylor University. She had come from the home of her parents in Columbus, Ohio, to visit a very dear friend of her mother. She was a mature woman, having graduated from Ohio State

---

\* Walter Oliver and Anna Skow were students at Taylor University contemporaneously with Mr. Blades. Later as Mr. and Mrs. Oliver, they were for many years in charge of the Seawall School in the City of Panama. This is a mission school under the control of the Methodist Church.

University in 1914 with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education. Mr. Blades says:

"We were married in 1920, at which time I had one more year at Drew Seminary. She taught school one year but preferred to enter the field of social service, opened to her in her home town. She continued with the Associated Charities there till almost a year after we were married."

## CHAPTER VIII

### ENTERING UPON FULL-TIME MINISTRY

**I**N THE later years in Drew Seminary and immediately after graduating with his Seminary degree of Bachelor of Divinity, Rev. Mr. Blades sought entrance to one of the Methodist Episcopal Church Annual Conferences but was not admitted; from the story as I get it from Mr. Blades's account both the presiding bishop and some of the conference members were responsible for delay. However, he was given a pastor's appointment as a supply and served in this capacity for three years, two of which, 1921-23, were in the very historical church known as the John Stewart Memorial Church, Marietta, Ohio; and one year, 1923-24, in the Clark Methodist Episcopal Church in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio.

An opportunity for more kindly treatment officially was offered in the Christian Church; so Rev. Mr. Blades accepted the pastorate of the Monroe Avenue Christian Church of Columbus, Ohio, where he served for the year 1925-26. Concerning his work in this church I quote his own words:

"In my fourth year of the ministry it fell to my lot in Columbus, Ohio, to engineer the Christian Church in finding and purchasing a fine church building and parsonage. They had been worshiping in a store room.

"Soon after this I was called to the High St. Chris-



tian Church of Carlisle, Kentucky. Here my pastoral activities were many and diversified. It was my privilege to get the only two churches of our group in the community to work cooperatively. Heretofore they had been constantly at loggerheads with each other. I was known as the 'marrying preacher, the burying preacher' because so many of both denominations called upon me to officiate. And I had to preach practically all the lodge sermons, though I was never a lodge man of any sort. In this community we were also successful in creating better race relations than there were before.

"After two and a half years at the above pastorate I was called to a larger field of service in the Presbyterian Church, W. S. A., at Bowling Green, Kentucky. Here we spent eleven years of great activities and unforgettable experiences. About the third year of this pastorate our church, Cecilia Memorial, was allocated to Logan Presbytery, previously all white. All the colored churches in Kentucky up to this time had been in one presbytery, Lincoln, which was dissolved, causing each church to be included in the presbytery in which it was geographically located. And here a new phase of my Christian ministry began—fighting against blind prejudice. I was like a child not wanted. It was not long, however, till God through His wisdom made our fellowship sweet and complete.

"My first sermon to the Logan Presbytery was delivered in Russelville, Ky., an occasion which I shall never forget. It was a beautiful April morning. The devotions were to precede the business of the Presbytery. The opening must be the keynote of the entire session, so I asked number 99 in our Hymnal to be

sung: 'O Worship the King All Glorious Above.' It was a glorious morning, when God in His good mercy came down upon our souls and cleared the whole atmosphere. The sermon was a stirring message which seemed to melt the fog and warm our hearts. I noticed this because of the way I was greeted after the sermon by those who heard it. There was a congenial spirit thereafter. How true are the words of a very old song,

Let Jesus fix it for you,  
He knows just what to do;  
Whenever you pray  
Let Him have His way,  
And He will fix it for you.

#### HONORED BY HIS CHURCH

"My Presbytery relation was different from this time on. From this very Logan Presbytery in 1939, after 'Jesus had fixed it' for me, I was elected commissioner to the General Assembly, which met in May at Cleveland, Ohio, at the Old Greystone Presbyterian Church. Because of the immense crowd the meetings of the General Assembly were moved to the J. D. Rockefeller Baptist Church.

"My election was quite a surprise to all those who knew the attitude of the members of the Logan Presbytery toward the negro. When they tried to elect a minister who was newly taken into our Presbytery, he said he would not accept because it was brother Blades's time to go and it would be very un-Christian for him to accept. My election to the General Assembly made me the first negro minister to be elected from the Logan Presbytery in the Kentucky Synod.

"In the year 1940 I was taken into the Birmingham Presbytery of Blue Ridge Synod, with pastorate at

Columbia, Tennessee, where I am now doing service for my Lord and Master. Here both Mrs. Blades and myself have a wider field for doing service in the Master's Kingdom.

"The Blue Ridge Synod takes in three states—Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi—comprising three presbyteries. In October, 1947, I was elected moderator of Blue Ridge Synod at Anniston, Alabama. The next year in April, 1948, I was again commissioned by Birmingham Presbytery, this time to the General Assembly meeting in May at Seattle, Washington. This was the greatest and best Assembly, it was said, for 52 years. I am glad I had the privilege of enjoying that meeting.

"Two years I held the office of president of the local Ministerial Alliance, and was in office in the hectic time of the racial disturbance here in February, 1946. Previously I was secretary of the organization several years. For the last two years I have been president, too, of the Rosemont Cemetery Association here in Columbia, Tennessee."



## CHAPTER IX

### THE BLADES FAMILY

#### WORK OF MRS. BLADES

AFTER mentioning the marriage of Joseph Blades to Lucile Frazier a year before he took his theological degree in Drew Seminary, we mentioned her having taught school a year, then taking up social service work with the Associated Charities of Columbus, continuing in this work till about a year after their marriage. From this time on, she, being well educated, and having had the valuable experience as a teacher and social worker, became a very efficient helper in his pastorates. Let Mr. Blades tell us of her wonderful work in the church and in various social organizations, as follows:

"Mrs. Blades has been a great help in promoting and assisting the work in all my pastorates, especially with the women and the children. She has been a great help in Kingdom building.

"Soon after we became members of the Birmingham Presbytery she was made chairman of Social Education and Action of the Presbyterial, which office she still holds. In 1945 she was elected treasurer of Birmingham Presbyterial. In 1946 she was solicited by the National Board of Missions to teach the subject, 'The Christian and Race Relations' in Junior Camp and Young People's Summer Conferences. She did so at Junior Hi Camp, near Morgantown, W. Va.,

all white; one week at West Point, Mississippi, all colored; two weeks at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, mixed. In October 1949, she was elected President of Blue Ridge Synodical."

And now, having left out along the way some very important items distributed along the space of several years, I feel that this would be a good place to have them appear:

### THE CHILDREN

Five of them—three boys, two girls. In order of their age as given in 1949: Rachel, nearly 29; Philip, 27; Miriam, 25; Hubert, 23; Melvin, 21. Rachel finished at Barber Scotia Jr. College (Presbyterian) at Concord, N. C. Recently this college has become a four years institution. She then took up work at a nursery school with an aunt in Columbus, Ohio. Philip finished two years at Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, N. C., and then enlisted in Radio Signal Corps School at Lexington, Ky. He remained in the Air Force and is now (1949) stationed at Scott Field near St. Louis as a second lieutenant. Miriam has been pursuing studies at Ohio State University, in the social science department, working her way through. Hubert has not started his college work yet; he was released from the army not long ago. Melvin is thinking of starting his college work now (1949).

## CHAPTER X

### RETROSPECT AND TESTIMONY

“**A**S I LOOK back over my life and see the many ways in which God has led me, both at home in the West Indies and in the United States of America, it is marvelous to see how God was leading and preparing me for life’s work which I could not see and a way I did not know.

“It is this initial promise which God gave me when I was leaving home for the first time to cross the seas and to go into different countries:

Isaiah 43: 1, 2, 3.

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.

How often I have gone back to these words and reminded myself of this mighty promise.

“When the days were dark and I could not see one step ahead I would hear Him saying to me, ‘Fear not, I am thy God.’ Then I would take new courage and go forward.

There are days so dark that I cannot see  
The face of my Lord divine,  
But He calls me back to the upward track  
By the touch of His hand on mine.



O the touch of His hand on mine!  
O the touch of His hand on mine;  
There is grace and power in the trying hour  
By the touch of His hand on mine.

“Yes, God is true to all His Promises, and the full effulgence of His light does not burst in upon us in a sudden way, but gradually shines upon the pages of our life and leads us in the path He would have us go.

“Through many years of traveling in the school of God and coming in contact with the different peoples of the earth and mingling with them, we learn something of the heart throbs of a loving Father towards His fallen children in every walk of life. Yes, we learn to love people by coming in contact with them and sharing with them in their burdens and sorrows.

“The people I met in St. Lucia and Central America and Boca del Toro were of one common Father God, so we met as brothers and sisters because we were of one Father who loves us all.

“The man I saw in the vision on board the ship en route to Boca del Toro and then met when I disembarked from the ship was one of our Father’s children. Our hearts were knit together in a bond of Christian love, although we had never seen each other before.

“It takes simple childlike faith to walk with God and to know that He is there even when one cannot see, feel, or hear His voice. But your faith holds, assuring you that He is there. Oh, glory to His name!

“I did not know that He was preparing me for the inconsistencies I would be exposed to, as I traveled through many places in this country. Many a time I felt my way hemmed in, and I did not know what to do, or where to go. Then I turned to my Heavenly

Father Who had promised to make my way, and doors were opened to me.

### IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

"I remember once I wanted some money to meet an obligation. I went to a white man—I did not say a friend, for I did not know him as a friend then, neither did he know me as such. He allowed me to use his name and I got the money I wanted. It is only as we strive to obey Him and walk in His way that we are able to make our way prosperous (Joshua 1:8).

"My lack of funds has always led me to prove that 'God is a very present help in trouble.' It was once again I wanted some money for one of the children in a very pressing need. I went to a doctor to borrow; he told me to use his name at the bank, and the banker, whom I had never seen but once before, said to me, 'You do not have to use the doctor's name; use your own name.' This was strange to me, for I had no collateral, not even one penny in the bank.

"This was my first business transaction with this bank. I got the amount of money I wanted and from that time up to the present, I can, at any time, get money when I am in need.

"I pray that if there be any help gained by reading the words of these pages, God may be honored and His son Jesus Christ be glorified, and become all in all to souls that find Him.

### A FINAL WORD

"Permit me to add this final word concerning the gracious and lasting friendship of Dr. B. W. Ayres, my former dean, through all these years; for his silent thoughtfulness, and for the spirit which has led

him to write this history of a life which would never have been written unless it was by some one who was willing to take it upon himself to tackle the job. His words and great interest, along with those of the Taylor Family, have been of immeasurable help to me. Of these I mention Professor Florence Cobb, Elizabeth Dancey, Sadie Miller, and Professor G. Francis Lee, who have been used of God in shaping my life."

*Joeseph P. Blades*



## CHAPTER XI

### A LARGER FRAME OF REFERENCE

**T**HE full significance of this life story for both Joseph Blades and Taylor University might be overlooked if the events narrated were not set in a larger frame of reference. If these events are just time-space happenings coming in sequence or concurrence by chance; or even links in a chain of mechanical cause and effect, with no selective intervention and purpose direction to the realization of certain rational ends, then what has been named the "Universe" should be called the "Chaos." But factors so far separated in time and space become so significantly connected that mere chance seems to be transcended in the implication of a Higher Power working for righteousness and meaning in the realm of personalities. In the realm of moral values, what is called physical evil (what is suffered, what would not be chosen for its own sake) is educative and disciplinary, and to the obedient and trusting soul often seen to be the way to the greatest spiritual good, and frequently also to a material gain instead of loss. God has shown Himself gracious to Taylor University in many instances in its century of struggle, as He has to many individuals forming a part of it. Some of these events stand out as being preternatural or miraculous. Some regrettable things have been experienced and were, no doubt, the chastening of the Lord for getting out of His will. He uses the best He can

get, even though, as with Israel, He often had to use severe discipline.

It seems that up to the time of the events mentioned in the narrative of this booklet there was Divine Order in the founding; in the maintenance of vigorous religious life in spite of financial difficulties; in the change of name; in the coming of Dr. T. C. Reade at that period when so wise and sacrificial a leader was needed as President; in the coming of Samuel Morris to stimulate great faith and deep consecration; in the common willingness on the part of teachers and students to endure hardships in a social order characterized by one of its leaders as "Plain Living and High Thinking." Then when President Reade, princely lover of God and lover of men, fell in the midst of his self-giving labors at the age 56, others inspired by his noble example carried on across some difficult years of necessary economic readjustment. Again when the future looked dark and hopeless, God laid His hand on another great soul with great faith and consecration, and, may I say, with a great, good wife—a very important qualification for such a task as they were accepting. These were Monroe Vayhinger, D.D., and Culla J. Vayhinger; he, with valuable experience both in the pastorate and in college teaching; she, a great personality, public speaker, and recognized leader in the W.C.T.U., being (and to be) for many years State President of this organization in Indiana. Both of them were ardent promoters of national prohibition of the legalized liquor business with a party committed to the enforcement of the law. This aggressive attitude against America's great legalized curse and disgrace was in the tradition of Taylor's leaders. The Wesleyan interpretation of the doc-

trine and life of Scriptural holiness was taught and preached—this, too, was in the Taylor tradition. Implicit in this was a great emphasis on Christian Missions; and many students went to foreign missions during Dr. Vayhinger's administration, 1908-1921. To enable students of small means to get a preparation for a life of service, charges for tuition and necessary living expenses were made as low as possible, probably dangerously low sometimes; and the most rigid economy in voluntary spending was inculcated, as related to the attainment of educational objectives, self-control, and stewardship responsibility. There was an attempt, as far as possible, to furnish an enriching and interesting life in extra-curricular activities within the bounds of the school and community by a careful guidance in both quality and quantity, as related to required duties and the question of obscuring or obliterating the line of demarcation between real Christian living and worldliness.

This brought to Taylor, for the most part, an earnest, sincere, high-purposed student body. True, there was an occasional entrant, sent by fond parents in the hope that the school with its vital wholesome Christian environment would do for the child what the home environment had failed to do; and, sometimes to the great joy of the parents as well as to the student, the school "rescued the perishing." But sometimes, to the sorrow of all, the school did not succeed, and in order to maintain its standard of conduct and achievement, had to part with the student. In order to render the greatest service to society, courses below college level, as well as the college courses leading to different bachelor degrees, were maintained for many



years, up to about 1923. While this tended to give a lower average of learning for the student body and hence some reproach in the academic world, it meant a great service to the church in taking care of the aspirations of many young Christians who, having for some reason missed the high school, and now being beyond normal high school age, had been awakened to the importance of an education. Many of these felt called to definite life-service in religion as ministers and missionaries. Because compulsory education laws, and the opening of high schools in every village or township, to meet the general demand for education beyond the grades made the pre-college training in Taylor much less serviceable, the work on the Taylor campus below the college level was abandoned.

Why have I said all of this? How is this related to the biography of Joseph Blades? If the reader remembers what was said of his enrollment, his will to prepare, his time on the T. U. campus, etc., the relation will be seen.

How is it related to the purpose of the author? That purpose is made up of more than a single motive: (1), To give honor to a person (and indirectly, persons) to whom honor is due. (2), To make known to former students and to friends of Taylor University the significant incidents in its history connected with the biographee. (3), To record for the present and future students and staff members of Taylor these particular evidences of providential care, and the grounds upon which God's interest in Taylor might consistently be based. (4), To give significance to the chapter heading, "A Larger Frame of Reference," which I now try to make meaningful.

Personality can have no meaning in isolation—in a social vacuum. “We are members one of another.” Potential personality, by social stimulation and interaction, becomes actual by becoming morally conscious; the more that environment furnishes stimulation and appeal to the moral potential and functioning of the human consciousness, the richer and fuller does the personality become by its positive response to this appeal of oughtness or obligation. Hence, the Taylor University influence upon Mr. Blades, beginning with the picking up of the drifting paper and reading about Sammy Morris, and the resulting desire to attend the school in which this wonderful Spirit-filled life was spent for its final few months—that desire holding across several years becomes significant. Then the actual life on the campus, with other students and teachers who exemplified what his questing soul was eagerly responding to, and assimilating to the spiritually growing personality he was when he came, gives the students and teachers, and, in fact, the institution as a conceptual entity a part in those events in which Joseph Blades was point of contact, or agent, so to speak, when he tapped resources which were immediately helpful to him and the school; and later in much larger measure to the school, as the various incidents show. Dr. Vayhinger, the unselfish and kind President, who opened Taylor’s door to Joe and helped him along the nine-year road, is vitally present in these fruitful incidents. The great-hearted princely preacher, classic scholar, and friend of the poor, and inspirer of moral courage, Dr. T. C. Reade, though dead, had some part in these God-given blessings. So also did Dr. John H. Shilling, the

cheerful, the industrious, versatile, indiscourageable, young Vice President, who carried the administrative load through President Reade's illness, and, as Acting President, after the President's death. Though he, too, had passed on before Joe arrived on the campus, he had left his impress of joyous sacrificial service on the institutional life. The nine years of Joseph Baldes at Taylor were all within the thirteen years of President Vayhinger's administration. Here and there throughout the story, this President's wholesome influence appears.

With the spiritual and social interactions day by day of all the personalities he touched through nine years on the campus, and these enriched personalities going to the ends of the earth, how the frame of reference extends to the eternities!

As I, now, at eighty-five years of age, look back on the University with its financial struggles, its self-sacrificing staff, its devoted students, its spiritual victories, and its contribution to the work of Christ's Kingdom, my prayer is that God will save us from those forces that tend to worldliness, materialism, secularism, personal and selfish ambition, the worship of the human rather than the Divine—save us from the drift into the spiritual poverty—and even vices—into which many colleges of noble origin and early history have been carried. If to become large and rich means to become worldly and wicked, may Taylor remain small and poor, but spiritually religious and ethically good—vitaly Christian.

Historically, the social and religious life portrayed and the leadership in Taylor University characterized in this book ends with the close of Dr. Vayhinger's



administration, in June 1921, except as references are made to the beneficial results arising later from the incidents related to the life of Joseph Blades.

This little volume of religious biography is projected upon a spiritually needy world with the hope that every reader shall have received spiritual encouragement and that every student and teacher of Taylor University who shall read it will feel the responsibility of such a spiritual institutional heritage, and will live with the firm resolve to pass on to the future *the Taylor sense of mission*.

A POSTSCRIPT FROM MR. BLADES AFTER A  
VISIT TO THE CAMPUS BY HIMSELF  
AND MRS. BLADES

TAYLOR, the School we love, still stands "beyond the village border," and, after 32 years of absence from this historic college, we are convinced that God must have planned its location and purpose. Yes, away from any large city, and a mile from the little town, it stands out as a monument for the things which are noble and good.

After being away from this hallowed spot for 32 years (except a few days in the centennial year, 1946) and returning on October 30, 1950, with Mrs. Blades for a few days visit, we notice the wonderful progress made on the campus since my student days. Mrs. Blades, for a long time, had wanted to see that institution which has meant so much to the world for its zeal and missionary spirit, and has sent out its young men and women into the far corners of the world.

In Isaiah 35:1, we read these startling words: "The Wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose." This has been made clear and plain to the thoughtful mind, and especially, to those who have a little knowledge of the history of Taylor University and wish to see it remain a spiritual force for good throughout the world.

The things which have made Taylor great are not the material things of life only, but the spiritual with the material; and the Taylor family and friends must never forget this; and we must always praise God for its existence.

The spirit of those living or dead, such as Bishop

William Taylor, Dr. T. C. Reade, Samuel Morris, Dr. Monroe Vayhinger, whose spirit still lives, and Dr. B. W. Ayres, for whom the beautiful Library Building is named, are some of the men who prayed for Taylor, worked for Taylor, sacrificed unstintingly, even to their dying moments, that it might continue to be the place where young men and women could not only find an education to fit them for service, but also receive a spiritual outlook and a desire to win men for God.

In my two recent visits to the campus I did not fail to see the progress in material things, such as lands, homes and buildings; and on this 1950 visit, two very significant additions to the plant, both just opened for use: the beautiful Ayres-Alumni Memorial Library, dedicated October 14, and the quaint little Prayer Chapel, a gift from the 1950 Class, made by reconstructing and beautifully furnishing the south-east section of the main floor of Sickler Hall, once a residence for men, but now mostly occupied by the Education Department. Significant because they meet a great need, and because together they seem to be the embodiment of the prayers of these men mentioned above. So let us keep in sight, not only the material things, but also the spiritual, for which they gave their last full measure of devotion, that Taylor, under God, may continue to live spiritually.

Joseph P. Blades

Columbia, Tennessee,  
November, 1950.







## Date Due

OCT 29 '53			
OCT 24 '58			
Demco 293-5			







# TAYLOR UNIVERSITY

## CO-EDUCATIONAL INTERDENOMINATIONAL

This historic institution is located on the south border of the village of Upland, Indiana. The public buildings are located on a large and beautifully landscaped campus. It is on a slight swell of ground placing it out of the dangers of flood; its elevation and distance from the dust and smoke of cities give it a healthful atmosphere.

Upland is located between Hartford City and Marion on the Columbus-Chicago branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and is connected with these two cities by bus service. Indiana highways, number 22 and 221, are on the border of the campus and pass through Upland.

Taylor has accreditation by the highest accrediting agencies as a liberal arts college. The state Board of Education of Indiana approves its work in the training of Public School teachers.

Many missionary candidates and ministerial students take their pre-seminary college degree courses here. Taylor provides wonderful advantages for such. Also Pre-medic, Pre-nursing and music courses.

Throughout its history of over a century it has been known for the vitality of its moral and religious life on the campus, and for the exclusion of those practices and habits which interfere with the highest quality of life and character.

For full information write for general bulletin and other literature. Address President of Taylor University, Upland, Ind.



